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found; but the man of moderate means must content himself with such as are within his reach. It is obviously for his interest, therefore, that all the professors of the healing art should be skilful and well-instructed; and this cannot be the case under the present system.

Whatever may be the result of the measures now in progress, they cannot fail to be productive of good from the discussion that has been elicited; and the Fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society will be entitled to the gratitude of the friends of learning, for the active part they have taken in promoting them. It is creditable to them to have led the way in recommending a system, which could not fail at first to be viewed with jealousy and distrust; and it is to their honor that they have not been deterred from pursuing it by the fear of the obloquy and reproach, to which they might subject themselves. They must have known before taking a step in the business, that their motives would be assailed by those who were hostile to the measure they advised; and we respect them the more, because disregarding all narrow and selfish considerations, they were willing to step aside from their ordinary course, and urge upon the community the adoption of a system, which, however excellent it may be in itself, might in the first instance make its advocates obnoxious. Of their ultimate success, we will not allow ourselves to doubt.

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ART. IV.—*Clarence. A Tale of Our Own Times.* By the Author of *Redwood*. 2 vols. 12mo. Carey & Lea. Philadelphia. 1830.

This work is perhaps not so finished as *Redwood*, and there is certainly nothing in it which displays so much genius as the character of Aunt Debby in that novel. But we have read it with more interest than any of its predecessors; and the lively and spirited sketches of artificial life and manners in it, will, we think, make it more entertaining to the generality of readers. It has all the fine qualities of head and heart which have so favorably recommended the former works of the fair author; the same pure style, the same elevated tone of morality, the same rare observation and exquisite tact, and the same healthful feeling and warm affections. We have placed the title of this book at the head of our article with the honest purpose of reviewing it, and not of writing an essay upon novels in general. Success-

ful authorship confers a distinction, which must not pass unacknowledged, even in this land of business and politics. It is a duty we owe to ourselves and our literature, to examine the claims of our countrywoman to the high reputation she enjoys; and though our estimate is formed, of course, from a perusal of all her works, yet had she written nothing but *Clarence*, she would amply deserve all our praises.

We know of nothing for which she is more remarkable, than her nice and discriminating habits of observation, and that fine tact, which with the directness of instinct, seizes upon what is important for the description of men and things, and rejects what is superfluous. She has an 'eye practised like a blind man's touch,' and she can distinguish instantly those minute shades which are so imperceptibly blended in nature as to seem but one color to common observers. Her pictures of natural scenery are drawn with the distinct pencil of Cowper, and they rise up and appear to the eye as we read, without any effort of our own to give them shape and presence. Almost every page of *Redwood* and *Hope Leslie* will confirm our remarks, and amidst the multitude of admirable descriptions, we are puzzled to select any one. It is no very easy matter, for instance, to describe a country-seat, though it may seem to be so at first; yet how perfectly has she succeeded in delineating the mansion of Mr. *Clarence*. We have no confused images of lawns, forest, and shrubbery, but every thing is distinct and defined, and we have no doubt, that if ten or twelve artists were employed each, to make a picture of the scene, their sketches would differ very little. The same remark will apply to her descriptions of artificial life and manners;—such as her account of the Shaker establishment in *Redwood*, and the picture in the second volume of *Clarence*, of the tone, dress, and conversation of the fashionable society of New-York. She is evidently more acquainted with men than books, and has sought truth in the 'light of things,' and not in the 'still air of delightful studies;' and her resources are in the highest degree available, for she has collected their very materials herself. She has kept an observant eye on the masques that make up the world's motley pageant, and drawn thence a living wisdom, far higher than the cold forms of mere learning. She has noted the looks and tones of men, the manner in which they are affected by events, the way in which differing characters display themselves, the things in which all men are alike, and those in which they are most

dissimilar. We are disposed to think more highly of this habit of discriminating observation, as a means of intellectual development, than most persons. He who goes about among men with his eyes open, will learn something better than the lore that is hidden in books. This is a thing in which women excel men ; it is a merit almost peculiar to female writers. Hence arises the perfect keeping observable in our author's pictures of still life, and the consistency and individuality of her characters, who are always one and the same in their conversation, their letters, and their actions.

She writes English with uncommon elegance and purity ; no small merit in these days of extravagance and caricature, when foamy declamation is called strength, and calmness is another name for feebleness. She has the rare merit of never being common-place, and if she has occasion to express a familiar thought, she contrives by some graceful turn or happy allusion, to give it the air and gloss of novelty. She never descends to that vulgar artifice of dressing up little or old ideas in language so ambitious, that we imagine for a moment that we have something very new and fine, till a second glance shews us that all is but varnish and gilding. Her style is perfectly feminine, full of a certain indescribable gracefulness and ease, arising from a fine perception of beauty and an inborn delicacy of taste, which seem always to select the best words, and to put them in their right places. The letters in *Clarence*, we think, are very fine specimens of epistolary style, easy, graceful, and spirited, equally remote from formal stiffness and slipshod carelessness. Almost the only fault of style we have noticed, is an occasional diffuseness, the easily besetting sin of female writers.

We trust that we may be allowed to speak of another winning charm in these novels, arising not so much from the mind as the moral character of the author. We mean the impress everywhere discoverable, of an unaffected goodness of heart, and a warmth of affection which folds in its embrace every thing that lives. As John Paul has somewhere said, she loves God and every little child. Her sympathies are ready and active, and called forth by every shape of distress, and she never turns aside from suffering virtue, however repulsive the garb it may wear. There is a beautiful tenderness and sensibility breathing out from her writings, like the fragrance from a rose. She delights to accumulate images of peace and happiness and sun-

shine, to describe all that is noble in man and attractive in woman—the virtue that exalts, the struggle that purifies, the trial that calls forth a seraph's energies, and the sweet affections that strew with flowers life's dusty highway. She does not know how to draw a villain ; she has no idea of the spasms and convulsions of the mind, around which guilt and remorse have thrown their serpent-folds. Man in the pride of his imperial beauty, full of truth, and honor and grace, with high thoughts and generous affections, with reason sitting on his brow, and the pulse of joy in his veins,—woman, with her veil of gentle loveliness, her lily-like purity, her loving and trusting heart,—the light of friendship, the soul-exchanging glance of love,—these are the themes which call forth her finest powers, and it is in the delineation of these only, that her genius appears in its proper element. Her descriptions of childhood are full of the dewy freshness of life's morning hour. In this respect we know of no one who equals her, no one who draws in colors so speaking the image of a beautiful and happy child, with his heart of gladness and voice of silver-toned glee, his brave spirit, his frolic blood, and his winning tricks. Years have not brought to her that cold philosophy which looks with a loveless eye upon life in its silken bud, which recalls with no kindly thrill the days when the world was a garden, and the air a rainbow, when the hours brought roses in their hands, and the wings of time made music as they moved. There is a beauty and a mystery in childhood, and the wisest may learn a lesson from the young pilgrim of life, who bears yet fresh about him the brightness of the Spirit-land, which he has so lately left.

‘Not in forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.’

The love of nature, and a familiar acquaintance with the changeful expressions of the ‘mighty mother’s’ countenance, are among the fine gifts of the author of *Clarence*. Her descriptions of scenery in the western part of Massachusetts in her *New-England Tale*, and in *Redwood*, may challenge a comparison with any in the language. She does not merely draw the features of a landscape, but she gives you the expression, and transfuses into her pages the spirit that hangs over it, like an atmosphere. She looks upon the outward world in the vein of the melancholy Jaques, translating its silence into

thoughts and images; but she draws thence the elements of a far more cheerful philosophy. She learns wisdom from the cups of flowers, and the whisper of the pine conveys to her a lesson of truth. Every leaf is pregnant with instruction, and every stream teaches as it brawls. The forms of nature have stamped their own likeness upon the soul of their worshipper, and every mute image without has given birth to a correlative idea within, united by a mysterious affinity, which all may feel, but none can define. In her graphic descriptions of natural scenery, there is no small portion of the fine philosophy of Wordsworth, which regards the fair forms of the outward world as the instruments of a spiritual influence upon the mind of man, as the varied steps through which the myriad tones of a universal harmony are breathed. Woods and mountains are not only enjoyed, but felt and understood,—they are as the face of a long-tried and never-failing friend. This sensibility to natural beauty exerts a most expanding and elevating power upon the spirit of man, and when it is united with that gifted eye, which can read the letters of power and love written all over this goodly universe, nothing short of religion is capable of exerting a more holy ministration.

But more than all the rest, the author of *Clarence* has that high and pure tone of moral and religious feeling, without which genius is a fatal curse, and fine powers are destructive in the exact ratio of their splendor and superiority. She never makes vice interesting or virtue repulsive; but paints each in its true colors, so that the mind obeying its natural instinct is enamored of the one and abhors the other. She draws no beings, half-gods and half-fiends, with a veil of splendid and romantic qualities, covering but not hiding the darkest and foulest traits of character, and constraining us to admire the actor, though we detest the guilt. She never makes merit ludicrous or contemptible, by connecting it with those low or ridiculous qualities, which are offensive to our taste; or vice attractive by a graceful garb, which engages our interest, though we feel angry with ourselves for permitting it to do so. She never relates a deed of villainy in that cool way, which makes us feel some doubt, whether the author do not rather admire than otherwise, what he treats so much as a matter of course. She does not look only among the cultivated and the intellectual for fine traits of humanity, nor shrink with sickly fastidiousness from virtue in humble life. The same Being who gave the lily its

exceeding beauty, and painted the enamelled cheek of the tulip, planted also the wild rose by the way-side, and scattered the seeds of the violet in a thousand fields; and He has shown the same equal benevolence in the human soul, His noblest work. He has caused beautiful affections and high virtues to take root in the heart, and they breathe the fragrance and bear the fruits of good works as often in the peasant as in the prince. The incense of love, and faith, and honor, ascends from the lowliest farm-house no less than the proudest palace. Our author, as we have said before, has been a keen observer of life and manners, and in accordance with the noble sentiment of Terence, has felt herself interested in whatever relates to humanity, and has learned to contemplate man as one of a species, separate from all adventitious distinctions. We regard her sketches of humble life as among the most felicitous portions of her works; strong, but not coarse, and full of sense, feeling, truth, and the nicest observation, reminding us in this last particular, of the minute accuracy of one of Wilkie's inimitable pictures. She depends for the interest of her stories rather upon the lowly and unobtrusive virtues, which are felt in the hours and minutes of life, gentle firmness, noiseless benevolence, and modest self-respect, than upon the more dazzling qualities, which can seldom be displayed in the common run of events, and if often exerted, give to the character an air of theatrical affectation. This healthiness of moral feeling gives to her works that kind of charm, which an amiable expression gives to a fine countenance, heightening the beauty of every agreeable feature, and making us overlook those which nature has less carefully moulded. We feel that we can cordially admire with a good conscience. No shadow of pity or regret for powers misapplied glides by to break the spell that charms us. We have no sublime free-thinkers, who boldly attack every thing that man holds sacred, no selfish misanthropes, who dare to hate the creatures God has made, no elegant ruffians rewarded with a fortune and a mistress instead of a halter, but the good man is honored and the villain punished. Our author never separates the tie that unites virtue and happiness, vice and misery, which succeed each other as invariably as thunder follows lightning or as spring comes after winter. But she deserves more than the praise which a virtuous heathen might have won; she has told us of the beauty and excellency of religion, and spoken to us in the name of

Jesus of Nazareth. We venture to say, that there are few books which make better Sunday reading than hers. Her religion is no stern-eyed Moloch, with brow of gloom and voice of denunciation,—it requires the sacrifice of no natural affections, and frowns upon no innocent pleasures. It is a beautiful and gentle spirit, mingling with the every-day concerns of life, giving new charms to joy, and a touching grace to the wan countenance of sorrow, ‘gilding with heavenly alchemy’ feelings whose home and birth-place is earth, brightening the golden links of the chain that binds man to his brother man, wafting to our senses the ambrosial airs of Paradise, and scattering gleams from a land of enduring brightness over the dark places of our mortal pilgrimage. The Spirit she worships is a spirit of love, heard in the still small voice as well as in the whirlwind and the thunder, and seen in the rainbow and the dew-drop as well as in the lightning and the cataract, whose temple is nature, for whom the stars burn incense and the sleepless ocean murmurs deep applause, who binds up the wounds of a broken heart, and guides the water-fowl to his reed-sheltered nest. She does not fall into that fatally common fault, of flattering human vanity by representing the mind as able to do every thing of itself, to fight down all opposition, to keep a well-poised equilibrium in all situations by its own unaided energies, and to climb to the highest sphere of virtue alone and unguided. It may seem negative praise to say of a book that its moral tendency is good ; but we conceive that a writer who devotes his powers to the cause of virtue, is worthy of praise in exactly the same degree as he is worthy of censure, who prostitutes them to the service of vice and licentiousness. A single great genius without moral feeling, is a greater curse to a generation than a pestilence or a famine. The amount of physical evil may be calculated, and the effect may be removed by discovering the cause ; but no one may compute the mischief produced by one who corrupts the issues of life and poisons the fountain whence principles flow, and no one can check or stay it. We have had the misfortune to live in the same age with more than one writer, who has profaned the pure flame of genius by mingling it with strange fire, and who has employed the powers that might have won a Sybarite to put off his sensual slough, in lending new decorations to the form of sin and a more seductive tone to the syren voice of pleasure. We have been told, that the mill-



horse regularity of virtue was fit only for the dull and lazy-blooded, whose thoughts never aspired above the clods of the valley; but that the spirits whose finer clay was warmed by a more ethereal fire, could dwell only in the intoxicating atmosphere of excitement, and see happiness only in the sparkle of the wine-cup, the wild extravagance of riot, the daring license of mirth, the flush of revelry, and the delirium of unlawful pleasure. We owe to all those who endeavor to purge the abused sight of the nations, and call back the muses and the graces to the bowers of innocence and truth, a debt of gratitude which is great in proportion to the genius and zeal they have displayed; and among the champions of the good cause, who are yet true to God and virtue, the author of *Clarence* deserves an elevated rank.

*Clarence* is a tale of our own times, descriptive of the manners of the present day and of this country. An author who delineates events among which the reader himself might, without any violation of probability, have been an actor, has much to struggle against, and yet something to favor him; and perhaps it would be difficult to say which side of the balance preponderates. The spirit of sympathy makes us feel a keener interest in the adventures of characters who wear the same dress, dwell in the same land, speak the same language and are interested in the same subjects as ourselves—while on the other hand, the matter-of-fact air and garb of sober reality which the world now-a-days wears, precludes the possibility of romantic delusion; and the creative power is both limited in its materials and checked by severe laws in the employment of them. As in the dusk of the evening the imagination converts a finger-post into an apparition and invests a farm-house with the shadowy gloom of a castle, so the twilight of tradition softens the outlines of things and blurs our conceptions of their forms and colors; till the highwayman may assume the port and dignity of a hero, and a petty skirmish be regarded with as much interest, as a battle which decides the fate of the world. The story of *Clarence* is a complicated one, with a good deal of intrigue, a rapid succession of adventures and of deep-laid plans, baffled by more ingenious counter-manœuvres. We have two pairs of lovers, one or two villains, a heartless woman of the world and a host of inferior characters, more or less subservient to the disentanglement of the plot, or rather plots. We do not intend to give a detailed analysis of the story; for

to those who have read the book it is unnecessary, and those who have not can form no idea of it from a meagre outline. We have always thought it unjust to an author, to distil two volumes into as many pages of a review; for in modern novels the story holds so subordinate a rank, that when stripped and presented alone it no more represents the book, than a bony skeleton does a body in the bloom and vigor of health. In this work too we have not one continuous adventure, to the winding up of which every incident directly or indirectly tends; but two or three distinct actions closely woven together, and no one sufficiently prominent to be considered as the main plot. But as we intend to offer a few strictures upon some portions of the story, we will give a rapid sketch of it, and speak more at large upon some particular parts.

The scene opens upon us in the throng and bustle of a crowded city. Among the gay groups which fill the streets, our attention is directed to a melancholy old man, whose slow pace and abstracted air present a striking contrast to the life and animation around him. An accident makes him acquainted with a fine high-spirited boy, whose noble bearing and engaging manners call into life the kind affections which misfortune had not entirely extinguished. They become friends; and nothing can be more beautifully described than the reciprocal affection of these two beings, the one at the very starting-post of life and the other hard by its goal. It is a group of youth and age, with the figure of love between. But we were not a little startled when we discovered that this old man and child thus thrown together by chance, stand to each other in the relation of grandfather and grand-child, and the discovery is effected by a combination of rather improbable events, which it is unnecessary to detail here. By the merest accident in the world, little Frank Carroll (the boy) persuades his father to have this mysterious old gentleman conveyed to his own dwelling instead of the almshouse, during a sudden illness occasioned, as we afterwards learn, by his overwhelming joy in learning that he was no longer childless, and that his long-lost son was no other than the father of the child whose loveliness and active kindness had opened anew the sealed fountains of his heart. Here an explanation takes place. Mr. Carroll is informed that he is the son of the stranger he had befriended, and an heir to his immense wealth; and that his real name is Clarence. Mr. Clarence senior dies soon after making this disclosure. As might be

expected in so enterprising a country as ours, Mr. Clarence is not allowed to enjoy the property of his father so singularly acquired without a law-suit; which, at a time when success seems hopeless, is decided in his favor by the interference of Gerald Roscoe, the hero of the story. But the tidings of his unexpected good fortune fall unheeded upon his ear. They come upon him at a time when wealth seems more worthless than chaff; he holds in his arms his dying child, and the agony of his grief is deepened by the reflection that the all-absorbing business of the law-suit had prevented his attending to his illness till it was too late. Poor little Frank—he had entirely won our heart by his charming qualities; and we parted from him with as much regret as if he had been one of our own acquaintances. We are sorry that the author should have thought it necessary to kill him, and hardly know why she did it, unless, as we have heard it suggested, she feared that he would eclipse not only his sister, the future heroine, but all the other characters in the book.

An interval of some years is supposed to elapse, ere the narrative is resumed. We are then introduced into the house of Mrs. Roscoe, who has been left almost destitute by the death of her husband, after enjoying for a long time the elegances of wealth, but who possesses in her son a treasure which makes her look with indifference upon her change of circumstances. Nothing can be finer than the conversation between the mother and son, in which the characters of the feminine and gentle matron and the high-spirited and chivalrous young man are delightfully contrasted—the unmingled love and confidence of the one, with the tender, respectful deference of the other—and we are readily convinced, that nothing can disturb the happiness which is based upon virtue and the affections. They are interrupted by Mr. Stephen Morley in a scene full of truth, shrewdness and comic nature.

It is not until now that the plot of the novel properly begins. The scene is transferred to the country-house of Mr. Clarence, who is a good deal altered from Mr. Carroll, not by the possession of wealth, (for he is neither a weak nor a vulgar person) but by grief for the loss of his son. A number of new characters are introduced, and among them the daughter of the host, Miss Gertrude Clarence, the heroine; who had been mentioned once or twice in the early part of the narrative, but hardly noticed, so much was she thrown into the shade by her more brilliant brother.

She does not take us by storm, but gains upon us in every page, her fine qualities lying too deep to be discovered at once. We have also Mrs. Layton, a woman of sensibility without feeling, and of cleverness without sense, her daughter Emilie, a perfect rose-bud of beauty and simplicity, of both of whom we shall say more hereafter, and Louis Seton, a young artist, full of the sensitiveness and shrinking timidity of genius, who teaches painting to Miss Clarence, and, as every young lady will guess, is in love with his fair pupil; besides many others who are merely introduced for the nonce, and have nothing to do with the main action of the story. After one or two very playful and animated scenes, in which some of the subordinate characters, and among others an English traveller, are hit off with great spirit, the interest is engrossed by the unhappy fortunes of Louis Seton, the young painter abovementioned, whose frame, weakened by the indulgence of a hopeless passion, and the self-tormenting fancies of dependent genius, is entirely overcome by the stinging mortification which he suffers upon Mr. Clarence's opening by mistake a letter written to him by a vulgar brother, in which his patron and his patron's daughter are spoken of in a tone of the most brutal coarseness. For the sake of his health the family make an excursion to Trenton Falls, whose magic scenery is described with great beauty and fidelity. Here some very extraordinary scenes take place. The hero and heroine encounter each other in a manner reminding one of the meeting of two persons in the night, one of whom has a dark lantern and the other not; for the lady learns the name of the gentleman, while he is not so fortunate, but remains for a long time ignorant who was the fair spirit whom he had seen for the first time in so romantic a situation; discovering thereby, in our opinion, a want of shrewdness very discreditable, if not to a hero, certainly to a man. Poor Seton finally becomes insane, disappears in a mysterious manner, and notwithstanding all efforts to trace him, remains undiscovered until a short time before death comes to relieve his gentle and sensitive spirit from all his real and imaginary woes.

In the second volume we are introduced into the gay world of New-York, and among the gilded swarm that enact the solemn farce of fashion; we breathe the scented air of drawing-rooms, our eyes are dazzled with the glare of candelabras, and our ears are familiar with the language of *persiflage*, and the shining counters that pass current in the *beau monde* for the sterling

coin of sense. Our author seizes and embodies with magic skill the fleeting colors and changing forms of fashionable society, and the tone and manner of those who regard life as one long drawing-room, of the heartless and fascinating woman of the world, full of sentiment and devoid of virtue, of the curled sop, whose soul seems lost in the folds of his cravat, of honest and respectable vulgarity and of worthless refinement. To the end of the work the purpose seems to be to prevent the marriage of Emilie Layton to Pedrillo, (the villain of the piece) a showy Spaniard, whose great wealth is a sufficient make-weight in the eyes of the unprincipled parents for the happiness of their child. This is effected by the liberality and zeal of the heroine, aided by Gerald Roscoe, who defeats a desperate attempt of Pedrillo to recover his mistress by open violence. Miss Clarence, during all her benevolent exertions for the sake of her friend, finds time to increase the favorable impression she had made upon Roscoe in her mysterious interview with him at Trenton Falls, though he does not find out till the last moment the name of his fair enslaver; and he a lawyer, strange to say. The story, if it ever spread much, must have been fatal to his rise at the bar. The novel ends with the suicide of Mr. Layton and Pedrillo, and the marriages of the hero and heroine, and of Emilie Layton and Mr. Randolph the true man.

Such is an imperfect outline of the story, stripped of all its episodes, and of the scenes, adventures, and relations more or less intimately connected with it. Our objections to it are grounded on the opinion that it is unnatural and improbable, and that the author has attempted to do what the highest genius could not accomplish, to give a highly romantic interest to events occurring in our own prosaic age and country. One thing does not follow another in the natural and easy order in which the real world goes on, but the changes are brought about by means not impossible to be sure, but such as would startle and astonish us in the highest degree, were we to see them really take place. The incidents by which the *denouement* is attained, depend often upon a succession of contingencies, any one of which would seem surprising, but whose coincidence falls hardly short of the miraculous. This is a violation of one of the essential laws of fiction; and there are some remarks of Professor Stewart on this subject, so much better than any thing that we can offer, that we trust we need present no apology for transcribing them. 'How many unexpected combinations of cir-

cumstances do we meet with, not only in history, but in the daily intercourse of society, which we should not hesitate to pronounce unnatural and improbable, if they occurred in a novel. In real life this very singularity amuses by the surprise it occasions, but in a professed work of imagination, the surprise offends us by suggesting doubts about the fidelity of the representation. In a work of imagination, besides, our pleasure arises in part from our admiration of the skill of the artist, and this is never so strongly displayed, as when extraordinary events are brought about by a series of ordinary and natural occurrences. An incident, on the other hand, out of the common course of human affairs, strikes us as a blemish, by seeming to betray a poverty of genius and invention in the author.'

Every reader of *Clarence* must have been struck with the violation of these just rules. Extraordinary events are continually brought about by extraordinary occurrences, and our surprise is continually called forth by the happening of incidents, which we did not expect even a page or two before. This, as a general rule, is a defect in a novel, though a merit in a drama. It is not impossible, for example, that an old man and a child should be attracted towards each other in the crowd of a populous city, and should form a devoted friendship; that the former should learn that he was the grandfather of his young favorite, and this too from the lips of the faithless wretch, to whom he had many years before intrusted his son and a part of his fortune, and who by successive changes had come to be his fellow-lodger in an obscure boarding-house in New-York: but surely all this is very improbable, and would have been regarded as miraculous, if it had really occurred. The events at Trenton Falls must, we fear, fall under the same censure. It is not a little singular, that all the principal personages should meet there by accident; and the moonlight scene is too much like one of *Mrs. Radcliffe's* wild creations, to seem in keeping with a 'tale of our own times,' and our own sternly matter-of-fact country. Would a lady of *Miss Clarence's* delicacy be likely to stroll out alone at midnight in search of the rapturous, like some love-lorn *Rosa Matilda*, and engage in conversation with a man to whom she was an utter stranger? How can we imagine that *Louis Seton*, dangerously ill, and an object of so much interest to a wealthy family, should be neglected to that degree that he could steal out from his room, and wander unobserved to the very brink of the cliff that overhangs the Fall?

And how could his delicate frame, weakened by illness, survive the exposure to the chill night-air, the plunge into the water, and above all the exhaustion of the nervous system by the frenzy of excitement into which he was thrown?

The relations too, under which Pedrillo is introduced to us, seem hardly consistent with probability. He is a dashing foreigner, whose home is that common-sewer of the nations, the Spanish West Indies, with the air of a voluptuary and an adventurer; precisely the sort of character to be regarded with the most suspicion by our shy and inquiring people, and to whom nothing short of the very strongest recommendations would have persuaded them to open their houses; and yet we find him the intimate friend of one of the most aristocratic families in New-York, and afterwards the affianced husband of the daughter—and such a daughter too—whose affections had been already given to a man every way worthy of her. It may be urged, that this is explained by the influence which his daring character had acquired over the timid and guilty Layton, but this is not the least unnatural part of the whole. That Layton's extravagance and love of dissipation should have driven him to the gaming-table, and that he should have attempted by unfair play to make his success certain, and should have been detected, we can easily imagine; but that he should have been so unmitigated a villain, so dead to human nature, as, for the sake of relieving himself from his embarrassments, to be willing to betray his first-born and favorite child into the hands of one whom he knew to be a monster of iniquity, supposes a degree of moral turpitude hardly conceivable, considering his education and rank in life. And the liberality of Mr. Clarence in disposing with a dash of his pen of sixty thousand dollars to second the generous zeal of his daughter, seems so quixotic and extravagant, that if it had occurred in real life, we fear the law would have extended its protecting arm to relieve him of the care of a fortune, which he lavished in so wild a manner. That the young lady, in the glow of enthusiastic attachment, should have thought all the money in the world mere chaff in comparison with the happiness of her friend, is not at all surprising; but that the father should have given up so large a sum to extricate a profligate and selfish man, who set a price on his child's head, from his self-caused difficulties, is a thing, we may safely say, which would never have occurred except in a novel. The means by which Gertrude Clarence

discovers the retreat of Louis Seton are extremely inartificial, and depend upon a succession of most improbable contingencies ; but the last hours of this sensitive child of genius are described in a scene so full of touching, yet sublime beauty, that we quite forget, in our sympathy and admiration, the manner in which we were introduced into his sick chamber. If the author had never written any thing but this scene, she would have entitled herself to the gratitude of all those, who know how much the character may be purified by the fountains that flow from the heart ; and we little envy the constitution of the man who can read it without emotion.

The *denouement* of a novel is the part which most severely tries an author's ingenuity ; for it is very possible that a story may have been skilfully constructed to a certain point, and then be wound up in the most hurried and clumsy manner, reminding us of the placid flow of a river till it reaches a cliff, over which it throws itself in foam and thunder. And here we cannot congratulate our author upon her success. A most cumbersome mass of machinery is employed to disengage and bring to a point the tangled threads of her story ; plot is set against plot, manœuvre put in opposition to manœuvre, and we are hurried on through so tortuous a maze of policy, that we involuntarily take a long breath by way of relief, when the ladies are finally restored to the arms of the true knights. The wretched Layton, having lost at the gaming-table the money given him for so sacred a purpose, and rendered half frantic by the threats of Pedrillo, who had his reputation in his power, consents to betray his daughter into the hands of the latter at a masquerade. Through two or three servants this plan comes to the ears of Gertrude Clarence, who (as woman's wit is always better than man's in matters of love and elopement) contrives, by dint of zeal, shrewdness and money, an ingenious counter-mine which is entirely successful ; and Miss Layton flies with her lover from the guardianship of the parents, who had proved themselves so unworthy of their trust. While we are clapping our hands for joy and benevolently smiling on the sagacious Roscoe, who has at length discovered that his fair *incognita* is no other than the rich and famous Miss Clarence, our spirits are quite dashed again by the appearance of the formidable Pedrillo, who, on learning how he had been duped, sets out with a band of trusty desperadoes with the resolution of regaining his lost mistress by open force or perishing in the



attempt. But he is doomed to be again baffled, for Gerald Roscoe follows close upon his heels with a party, well armed and strong in the consciousness of a good cause. They all meet at an obscure inn, a *rencontre* takes place, which ends (of course) with the success of Roscoe and his followers, and the death of Pedrillo. Every one who has read the book, must have remarked in how unskillful a manner, and with what violations of probability this catastrophe is effected; but it is so satisfactory to our feelings, and the letters with which the work ends are so exactly what they ought to be, and leave the mind so full of images of peace and happiness, that we close the book with a glow of pleasure, unalloyed by the recollection of strange adventures and unnatural incidents.

The story, with all its faults, is eminently free from the unpardonable sin of dulness. It is, in fact, highly interesting, perhaps the more so from the romantic coloring thrown over it, and the occasional violations of strict probability. The variety of adventures, the rapid changes of scene, the succession of incidents, never permit the attention to flag for a moment; and though we are conducted to our journey's end by a circuitous route, it is one 'so green and so full of goodly prospects on every side,' that we quite forget our fatigue in the pleasant scenes that open around us. There are some delightful episodes scattered along the narrative, of which we have not spoken, but whose merit the reader will find out for himself. We were particularly pleased with the description of Abeille and his abode—an oasis of verdure amid a desert of brick pavements and dead walls—his own buoyant temperament proof against that keenest arrow in fortune's quiver, the recollection in poverty of former wealth and splendor. The laughing beauty of his daughter, graceful and merry as one of her own canary-birds, the tempter that enters this Eden of peace, the struggle in the heart of poor Angelique, and her happy deliverance from the snares of the seducer, are sketched with exquisite fidelity; and over all is shed that nameless charm arising from true sensibility and feminine tenderness of feeling, for which all the scenes of our author, in which the workings of the affections are portrayed, are so remarkable. The history of Louis Seton (with the exception of, now and then, a little high-flown extravagance) is beautifully told, and the tale of his melancholy fortunes runs like a thread of sable, through the chequered web of the narrative. The galling pain that genius writhes

under when forced to drink the bitter cup of poverty and dependence, the jealous misinterpreting suspicions of a diseased sensibility, the agonies of a spirit bleeding from self-inflicted wounds, and the effect of all these upon a frame which, from its sensitiveness, seems to be one nerve, are conceived with a high degree of power. In some parts, particularly in the closing scenes, she has soared to a higher elevation than in any other portion of this novel, and we know not, but that we may add, of her former ones also. We almost wonder that Miss Clarence could not make up her mind to return his devoted passion, as we are told on good authority, that ‘pity is akin to love,’ and no one could help feeling the deepest compassion for his desolate situation and the gloom in which his life was steeped. When we remember his fine intellect, his enthusiasm, his purity, and the idolatry which women always feel for genius when united with moral feeling, we think that if we had been in the place of Gerald Roscoe, we should have been considerably agitated if we had been aware that we had so dangerous a rival. The least efficient portions of the book are those in which the author has attempted to give a tragic grandeur to the workings of dark passions, and to thrill us with the fearful collision of guilty minds. To do this with success, requires not only a peculiar and masculine talent, but a familiarity with all the dark corners of the human heart, and a cool observation of the language and conduct of men, in such circumstances, and under such excitements, as no respectable woman has ever an opportunity of remarking. The most valuable and characteristic scenes are those in which the lash of playful satire is applied to the lesser foibles of life, and the unostentatious *home-bred* virtues are set forth and eulogised; for these are the traits which women have the most frequent opportunities of observing, and are the most skilful in catching and delineating. The visit of the heroine to the family of the Browns suggests itself to our recollection as an example in point. It is admirable and consistent with itself throughout. Their gorgeous house, in which the master and mistress are the only plain pieces of furniture, and the rich ore of sense and feeling running through their homely conversation, are described in a manner that seems to shew that the author is struggling between her sense of the ridiculous, and her sympathy with goodness, under however coarse an outside; and the different manner in which the unworthiness of their son affects the parents, the forgiving tender-

ness and garrulous sorrow of the mother, and the affected sternness of the father, which renders only more striking the convulsive workings of natural affection, shew a very nice discrimination, and are conceived with a genuine pathos, that goes straight to the heart. If there be any one so fastidious as to pronounce this scene vulgar, we think his taste needs correcting. Another excellent scene of the same nature, but more comic in its cast, is the description of the dinner-party at Mr. Clarence's, in which we hardly know which to admire most, the spirit of the individual portraits, or the skill with which they are grouped and contrasted. The English traveller is sketched in a most good-natured spirit, with a great deal of sly humor, but entirely free from caricature, and the rude brushes which his dignity meets with from the blundering forwardness of Mrs. Upton are so impregnated with the salt of wit and true *vis comica*, that we regret very much to have seen so little of this hopeful scion of nobility. It is with such weapons as these, that travellers of the stamp of Mr. St. John should be attacked. To employ argument and eloquence against them would be like cannonading a wasp's nest, though that illustration will hardly hold, as these gentry have the buzz of the insect without its sting.

If there are any who agree with us in our opinion, that the best part of a novel consists in its sketches of character, they will find a great deal to admire in Clarence. The author has gone through the high-ways and bye-ways of life and filled her sketch-book with copies of nature, and by decomposing and combining these anew, she has given us a great variety of characters, each of which has the distinctness of individuality and the fresh coloring of nature; and yet none of them, (as far as we know) are representatives of any living being. We feel in reading the book, that we have certainly seen this person and been acquainted with that one, but we cannot tell when or where, and in endeavoring to remember, we feel that puzzling sensation attendant upon the effort to recall the effaced images of a dream. In the character of the heroine, (for as in gallantry bound, we assign her the first place,) the author has accomplished what few would have the courage to attempt, and still fewer the talent to execute; namely, the making her principal female character interesting without great personal beauty. We can hardly conceive of a heroine without beauty, any more than we can of a star without brightness, or a rose without fragrance, and even Jeanie Deans, universal favorite as she

is, is regarded as but a fine exception to a general rule. Miss Clarence is well defined by the author herself, as a 'heroine of the nineteenth century.' She has the strong sense, the quiet energy, the pure-toned feeling, the absence of affectation, extravagance, and mawkish sentimentality, which would secure the highest esteem and admiration in real life, and which enable her to act with decision and success in situations where some young ladies we have read of would only have screamed and fainted away. When we were first introduced to her, we were afraid she was going to be one of those pattern-women, who never do any thing wrong, and who make the worst imaginable heroines, because we know that in whatever circumstances they may be placed, they will do and say exactly what is most proper; but we were refreshed by perceiving, on a little further acquaintance, that she could now and then commit an amiable indiscretion, and be hurried by her warm-hearted impulses out of the pale of rigid prudence. The author has shewn no little skill in suffering her fine traits of character to be developed by circumstances, and in leaving the reader to form his own opinion without continually challenging his admiration, and this makes the lady herself far more interesting; for there is a great charm in those characters that keep something in reserve, and shew new excellencies to meet the call of new emergencies. We regard her as quite superior to the hero, though he is a very fine fellow, spirited, high-minded, self-forgetting, and with 'all good grace to grace a gentleman.' He richly deserves the happiness that falls to his lot, but he has not that charm of individuality which Miss Clarence so eminently possesses. He seems to be merely one of a species, a promising young man about town. We hear rather too much of his white teeth, his flashing eyes, and his noble bearing, and we feel almost afraid that he must himself have participated in the general admiration which his graces and accomplishments excited. But the hero of a modern novel is always the least important personage in it, and all that is required of him is, that he should be young, handsome, and brave, bow gracefully, and speak good English.

Mrs. Layton is the most brilliant and effective character in the book, and the perfect success with which she is conceived and embodied, discovers no inconsiderable portion of genius and inventive power. From the first to the last, she is the same finished piece of art. She wears elegance like a mantle,

and to be graceful and *recherchée*, costs her no more effort than to move and breathe. Her conversation and letters are full of that sparkling originality, which arises from the union of wit in conceiving, and taste in expressing thoughts. She has made the art of pleasing a study, and has neglected nothing which may contribute to entire success. She can encourage the diffident, flatter the vain, amuse the grave, instruct the gay, and adapt herself so dexterously to the tastes and opinions of all she talks with, as to make each one imagine himself an object of particular interest to her. She has seen enough of mankind to be able to discover with ease the assailable points in the characters of those whom she wishes to influence, and knows enough of books to quote opportunely and give her opinions confidently ; yet to a superficial observer, she might seem to have studied man as profoundly as Bacon or Tacitus, and to possess a mind enriched by tributes from every province in the realms of thought. She is armed cap-a-pie for the encounter of wits, and possesses every weapon requisite for the mimic jousts of a drawing-room, the sparkling repartee, the keen-edged, yet sheathed rebuke, the disguised compliment, the gay *bon mot*, the pensive sentiment. She can employ them all with the happiest effect, wound without seeming to wound, and charm we know not why. Yet with all this, she is deficient in every thing that makes a person truly respectable and praise-worthy. She has not a spark of genuine feeling nor a ray of genuine sense, and has not read one page of the true philosophy of life, that philosophy which feeds the mind with thoughts of beauty, and stamps upon the heart sweet images of love. She fears nothing but ridicule, and worships nothing but opinion. She bows to the golden calf of fashion, and neglecting the unchanging forms of things, watches the shadows of the clouds that pass over them. She is so exquisitely selfish as to sacrifice the affections of others to her own tastes, and she would not hesitate to gratify her slightest whim, though at every step she crushed a human heart. This portrait is drawn with a master hand, and what is peculiarly excellent in it is, that in our admiration of her fine powers, we never cease to lament and pity their perversion. No young lady could ever wish to be like Mrs. Layton, and no one can read her history without learning from it a valuable lesson. We have heard many people express surprise, that the author should have made Gerald Roscoe, a young man

of so much moral purity, (and the young have the least charity for the unprincipled,) so great an admirer of Mrs. Layton, especially as the latter was so little of a hypocrite, and so openly avowed her contempt for things which most people regard as sacred. But no one will object to this, who knows the amount of the influence exerted by a fascinating married woman upon a young imaginative mind, and how possible it is for the strongest and purest natures to be, like Tasso's hero, caught in the toils spread by an artful Armida.

We do not think the character of Pedrillo a very successful effort. He is rather common-place, and has nothing to distinguish him from all the genteel scoundrels that act by 'insinuation and not by bluster.' There is too much of the bragger and bravo about him. He reminds us of a vulgar actor, who rants the louder, and gesticulates the more vehemently as the plot deepens, and the storm grows darker around him. He is a mere tyro in knavery, for the foppery of his dress and the *gout de spectacle* which runs through his air and manners, are the things most calculated to draw the attention of others towards him, and make him an object of suspicion; while the very first effort of a complete knave is to throw people entirely off their guard by an affectation of great plainness and sincerity. He has not the fabled power of the basilisk to slay silently, but his rattles betray him as he moves to his work of death. The fair author cannot be supposed to have speculated very deeply on these subjects, and we presume no one will regret it, for if there be a 'knowledge which is power,' there is also an 'ignorance which is bliss.' The scenes between him and Layton are the least efficient in the book, for there is no thrilling sense of sublime energy or heroic suffering in them, and our detestation of the villainy of the one, and our contempt for the craven spirit of the other, are not qualified by the admiration which we cannot help feeling for guilt when united with great intellectual power.

There are a number of well-drawn characters besides these, which our limits will hardly permit us to mention. There is Emilie Layton, graceful and lovely as a wood-nymph, pure as a dew-drop, and full of sweetness, feeling and truth; in every thing presenting a most delightful contrast to her artificial and heartless mother. And there is Mr. D. Flint, (whose feelings we will not wound by writing his name at full length,) for whom we have a great deal more respect than we could have sup-

posed possible when we were first acquainted with him. He is a very fair specimen of a Yankee adventurer, and it would be well for New-England if all those of her children who have his bustling perseverance, his impudence, and his self-complacency, had also his honesty, his warmth of heart and his rectitude of principle. Let us not forget that gentle carpet-knight Major Daisy, whose warlike *prænomen* was won, as you may guess, in no desperate fight, and who in all his campaigns never suffered any greater inconvenience, than that of a slight ducking, and never encountered a more dangerous foe than a restive horse. Long may he live, and have no rival near the throne in his judgment of shawls, perfumes, and laces, and may the next lady to whom he offers his illustrious self, have more taste than Gertrude Clarence.

We close our imperfect notice by cordially recommending this novel to the reading public, and we would even beg those who, as a general rule, avoid works of modern fiction, to make an exception in this instance. We are proud of our distinguished countrywoman, and regard her works as an honor to our land; and the reason that we have spoken so much of the faults of Clarence and dwelt so sparingly upon its beauties, is, that the latter bear so large a proportion to the former, and are in themselves so striking, that no reader of common apprehension can help finding them out and admiring them for himself. We are grateful to her for the pleasure she has afforded us, and would beg her to continue her labors in the neglected vineyard of American fiction; to paint the glorious scenery of her own native land and the virtues of its children, to tell us of the nobleness of its sons, and the beauty of its daughters, and 'to hold the mirror up to every shape of life and every hue of opinion.' Let her not attempt to give a highly romantic coloring to her plots, for the web of life in our Western world is too coarse to bear the embroidery of romance. Nor let her attempt to give a highly dramatic effect to detached scenes and particular situations, for the power of doing this is a gift bestowed upon very few, and much as we admire the author of Clarence, we are constrained to say that she is not one of them. Her excellence consists in her strong sense, her feminine feeling, her powers of description, her vigorous and beautiful English, the touching eloquence with which she pleads the cause of humanity, and above all, the keenness of her observation and her skill in de-

lineating the lights and shadows of character. She has but to look around her to find an ample field for the exercise of her talents ;—she may find abundant food for speculation in the Protean forms which society assumes in our wide continent,—in the gay throngs that chase amusement from one watering-place to another, and in the lowly virtues that cluster round our farm-house hearths, and, like flowers that twine around the living rock, give beauty and fragrance to the hardest and coarsest forms of life. To the writer of fiction, whose *forte* is character-drawing, we know of no land like ours, whether we regard the extent of our territory, the variety of the stocks from which we sprung, the youthful and electric vigor with which the veins of our world are filled, and the unchecked freedom with which it is our unvalued privilege to act and think. The face of society has not by long attention been ground down to one uniform level, and vigorous and fantastic shoots of character are not nipped by the frost of hoary convention. The mountain-wind is not more free to blow, than is each man to indulge his wildest whims. And as the harvest is plenty, so are the laborers few ;—the materials of romance in the old world are waxing threadbare, but the charm of unworn freshness is here like morning-dew. We would call upon all the sons and daughters of genius to be up and doing, and we would entreat the author of *Clarence* in particular, to persevere in the course she has so successfully entered upon, for her own sake and her country's sake.

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ART. V.—*Essay on the Hieroglyphic System of M. Champollion, Jr. and on the Advantages which it offers to Sacred Criticism.* By J. G. H. GREPPO, Vicar-General of Belley. Translated from the French, by ISAAC STUART, with Notes and Illustrations. Boston. Perkins & Marvin. 12mo. 1830.

Our number for October, 1829, contained an article from a learned correspondent, on the subject of Egyptian Antiquities, satisfactorily showing the light, which M. Champollion's discoveries have already cast upon the ancient history of Egypt. The appearance of a translation of M. Greppo's work has seemed to us a fit opportunity for a brief account of the origin and nature of those discoveries, a curious subject,